

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
INSPECTORS
OF THE
STATE ALMSHOUSE,
AT BRIDGEWATER.

OCTOBER, 1861.

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1861.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

INSPECTORS' REPORT.

*To His Excellency the Governor, and the Honorable Council, of
the Commonwealth of Massachusetts :*

In compliance with a law of this Commonwealth, the Inspectors of the State Almshouse, at Bridgewater, respectfully present the Eighth Annual Report for the financial year ending the thirtieth day of September, A. D. 1861.

PAUPERS.

Owing, in part, to the present embarrassed state of the country, which deprives many laborers of employment, and consequently of the means of earning a comfortable subsistence, the number of inmates in the almshouse has been greatly increased, and is now much larger than usual at this season of the year, and is rapidly increasing.

The physical, mental and moral condition of the inmates here, the care and attention they receive, with their results, have been so often described in the Annual Reports heretofore presented, that many of the facts herein stated, must of necessity be a repetition, in substance, of the past history of the institution.

Until within about six months past, a very large proportion of the applicants for admission to the almshouse were sadly diseased when received. Since that period, a much smaller number than usual of sick and diseased persons have been sent here.

It is a humiliating fact to contemplate, that more than three-fourths of the debility, disease and suffering of the inmates is caused by their dissolute habits of life, previous to their admission to the almshouse. When the last dollar is expended for the intoxicating draught, or for some other indulgence alike injurious to health of body and mind; when the patience of the last friend has been exhausted; when disease is irrevocably fastened upon its victim; then, and very often, not till then, do they seek for a resting place, a home in the almshouse, where they are kindly cared for by an experienced and faithful Superintendent, who is as prompt to cheer and comfort the weary and the afflicted, as he is prompt to rebuke and restrain the incorrigible and refractory.

The inmates are liberally supplied with substantial and wholesome food, and their clothing is warm and comfortable.

Very few of the male adults are able to labor, and a large proportion of that few are from the demented and idiotic. These, with the larger class of boys, are employed in such light work as is adapted to their mental and physical powers.

The number of broken-down and disabled females, in proportion to the whole number, is less than that of the males. Such of these as are able, are variously employed in work adapted to their mental and physical powers.

A large number of the children have been removed, during the past year, from this to the almshouse at Monson; notwithstanding which, the number of children now in this almshouse is greater than was given in our Report of last year. Most of the children here, not born diseased, are enjoying good health. The adage, that "as the twig is bent the tree inclines," is as true here as in the more favored walks of life. Children received here early, before the evil passions and propensities are strongly developed, and before the influence and example of corrupt parents are brought to bear upon them, are as easily trained and make as ready advances in mental and moral culture, as those of the same class in any community. At a proper age, some suitable place, at a trade or other employment, is provided for them; in doing which, a due regard is had to their future prospects as well as to their present welfare.

SCHOOLS.

Two schools, as usual, are taught here, for the improvement of the children in mind, morals, and behavior; one as a primary school for the younger class of children, the other for the older and more advanced, in both of which are taught the same branches as in our public schools, with which they will not compare unfavorably in the same branches.

These schools have been taught, during the past year, by young ladies every way worthy and well qualified in education, and in their habits and character.

The proficiency of the scholars discloses an important qualification in the teachers: that of so imparting instruction as to make the study pleasant and the pupil interested.

Music constitutes one branch of study in these schools, and is taught with commendable success by one of the teachers in the institution.

It can hardly fail to interest any one who will take the trouble to observe these children in school and out of it, to learn their history and mark their progress and development, most of them without parents or friends, and all dependent upon the munificence of the State.

INSANE.

More than one hundred demented, idiotic and partially insane persons are now residents in this almshouse. Some of them are demure and harmless, others are turbulent, noisy and quarrelsome. The management of this latter class of inmates is often difficult and embarrassing, there being no suitable place provided for keeping them separate from the more quiet and peaceable class. Not only those among them who are disposed to be quiet and unobtrusive are deprived of much of the rest and repose so essential to a diseased mind, but all located near them are annoyed and disturbed by them.

In our last Report we respectfully urged the necessity of having a separate building for this class of inmates, where they might be more secluded from outside influence, and less annoying to others. But a committee from the governor and council having visited this almshouse since our last Report was made, in their Report have recommended the removal of the insane from the almshouse, in which recommendation we most heartily

concur, and which, if carried out, would obviate the necessity of an additional building for the insane.

HOSPITALS.

The medical department is under the immediate care of the Resident Physician, Doctor S. H. Carney, an intelligent and skilful physician, and well adapted to the position he holds in this institution.

The number of admissions to the hospitals has been less during the six months last past, than usual, although the number of admissions to the almshouse has been larger than usual in the summer and early autumn. The number of deaths, also, during the past year, has been less than in previous years. The rooms used for hospitals are capacious and well ventilated. Kind and experienced nurses are in attendance upon the sick, and generally manifest an interest in their health and comfort.

BUILDINGS.

Some changes have been made in the cooking department. The old boiler having become worn out, a small building has been erected, in which has been placed a new boiler with the necessary apparatus, connected with the cooking establishment. Another small building has been constructed near a never-failing spring, a short distance from the house, with a small boiler and steam pump attached to it for the purpose of forcing water from the spring to the buildings. The expense of constructing these buildings, with the boilers placed in them, and the machinery connected with them, as at present appears, is \$2,651.19, a much larger amount than the estimate made by the Inspectors and the mechanics. But the boiler in use had become so badly worn and dilapidated, and its condition being such as to render the buildings insecure, and endanger the lives of hundreds, it became imperative for the safety of the buildings and their occupants, that the work should be done; and the Inspectors would have been considered culpable, under the circumstances, had they neglected to make these improvements, knowing, as they did, the difficulties and dangers that existed.

The halls and lodging-rooms being large, renders it necessary that a large number of inmates be placed in each room, and

this makes it imperative that the rooms should be thoroughly ventilated. This is carefully attended to by the Superintendent. Disease cannot always be avoided, but by timely care and attention its worst features may be, and often are, averted, and the patient saved. Idiocy and insanity are calamities that cannot always be guarded against or controlled; but by a uniform course of mild language and kind treatment, may be, and often are, greatly mitigated, and sometimes restored to reason.

Poverty and want are misfortunes hard to be endured; but these, too, may be and are greatly relieved, not alone by the amount of subsistence furnished, but by the manner and feeling manifested in contributing that relief.

THE FARM.

Progress in the cultivation and improvement of the farm connected with the almshouse has been conspicuous in the past year, as in years gone by. Swamps, bogs and lands, yielding nothing of value, have been made productive, and the farm, as a whole, wears the appearance of comeliness and thrift. The crop of hay this year is larger than ever before, and is of excellent quality. The harvest of vegetables last year was abundant, and in good condition.

The time for harvesting the vegetable crops of the current year has not yet arrived; its productions cannot, therefore, be stated with any degree of accuracy. Potatoes look unpromising, the early drought checked their growth, and present appearances indicate a scanty harvest of this most essential vegetable.

The present condition of the farm, as compared with its condition when purchased by the Commonwealth, furnishes ample evidence of the fact, that a great amount of labor, good taste, and judgment, have been expended upon it.

STOCK.

The number of cows has been gradually increased, as the amount of grass, hay, and other fodder for cattle has accumulated upon the farm,—long experience having proved it to be economy to buy milk, rather than to buy feed for cows. The number of swine is about one hundred and fifty. The number of horses, oxen, and young stock is about the same as last year.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

Religious services on the Sabbath are held in the chapel, as usual, by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, the Chaplain, an intelligent and successful preacher of the gospel. The children constitute the choir, and led by one of the teachers, sing the praises of the Most High, and thus contribute an important part in public worship.

The tendency of these Sabbath services upon the morals and manners of the children has been salutary, producing good impressions and favorable results. With the adults, who have been trained in the haunts of vice and degradation, the prospects of reform by teachings from the sanctuary, or elsewhere, are less promising.

For a more particular and minute account of the receipts and expenditures, the financial concerns and general management of the almshouse, we refer to the report of the Superintendent, of whose ability and faithful services in the responsible office which he has so long and so ably filled, we have often spoken in former Reports, and again with pleasure repeat our hearty concurrence and testimony.

The Resident Physician's report will furnish a full account of the hospitals, of the sick, their diseases, the number of deaths, and the situation and management of all that appertains to his department.

Doctor Carney entered upon the duties of Resident Physician here in April last, highly recommended by some of the most distinguished medical gentlemen in the Commonwealth. Since that time he has been unremitting in his labors, and has given satisfaction.

We refer to the Chaplain's report for a further account of his labors of mercy with the inmates, and of his success in his pastoral duties among them. His sober earnestness in dispensing the truth to the benighted of every clime, claims our acknowledgment and our hearty aspiration that his efforts may receive a blessing from on high.

Though last, not least, we again with pleasure acknowledge the faithful services of the chief Matron, the esteemed wife of the Superintendent; her kind and cheerful manner of discharging her arduous duties among the female inmates, (for often a greater good results from the *manner* of doing an act, than from

the act itself,) has won for her the respect and esteem of all the inmates and officers of the institution.

The other officers and employees in the almshouse, both male and female, with some exceptions, have been faithful and attentive in their several departments, for which our acknowledgments are cheerfully tendered.

JAMES FORD,
J. H. MITCHELL,
IRAH CHASE, JR.,

Inspectors.

S U P E R I N T E N D E N T ' S R E P O R T .

To the Inspectors of the State Almshouse, at Bridgewater :

GENTLEMEN,—I herewith present a statement of the financial condition of the institution, for the year ending September 30, 1861.

SUMMARY OF INMATES.

Number in the house, October 1, 1860,	.	.	.	480
admitted during the year,	.	.	.	1,512
in the house, during the year,	.	.	.	1,992
discharged and returned,	.	.	.	1,099
died,	.	.	.	129
remaining October 1, 1861,	.	.	.	764
Men, 169 ; women, 262 ; boys, 203 ; girls, 130.				
Average through the year, 631.				

EXPENDITURES.

Amount expended from October 1, 1860, to Decem- ber 31, inclusive,	\$10,034 78
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RECEIPTS.

Cash for stock, &c., sold,	\$474 73
Cash from treasurer of Commonwealth,	9,560 05

The above sum (\$9,560.05) deducted from the balance of the appropriation on hand, at the time of the last report, leaves the sum of \$2,529.69, not required for the current expenses of the house for the year 1860. From this remaining balance, there has been allowed and paid to the towns of Randolph and Nantucket, for the support of paupers, the sum of \$100.69, which

leaves in the treasury the sum of \$2,429 not needed during the year for which it was appropriated, viz., 1860.

Amount expended from January 1st to September

30th, 1861, (inclusive,) \$25,030 82

Amount received for same period :

Cash for stock sold, transportation of paupers, and

sundry small items, \$427 33

Cash from treasurer of Commonwealth, 24,603 49

Whole amount expended for the institution, from

October 1st, 1860, to October 1st, 1861, . . . \$35,065 60

Appropriated as follows :

For Salaries and expenses of inspectors,	\$550 85
Salaries of officers,	5,756 75
Sundry persons—incidental labor,	308 97
Labor of mechanics,	124 73
Lining tanks, plumbing, &c.,	227 09
Dry goods and bedding,	3,150 91
Fish,	322 42
Grain,	681 98
Crackers,	102 95
Lime, lumber, cement and bricks,	225 89
Tea, coffee, chocolate and shells,	732 34
New pump and repairs of others,	83 95
Boots, shoes and leather,	594 44
Cows, beef and farm stock,	1,227 90
Eggs,	34 87
Milk,	801 50
Incidental expenses,	145 71
Transportation of merchandise and inmates,	580 36
Fruit and vegetables,	63 48
Salt beef,	1,324 00
Fresh meat,	1,881 60
Small groceries,	136 56
Salt, vinegar and pepper,	153 09
Hops and malt,	90 56
Cheese,	111 92
Butter,	353 73

For Flour,	\$6,110 25
Light,	182 68
Salt pork,	467 00
Sugar,	230 11
Molasses,	662 19
Soap,	335 28
Stationery, papers, school and library books, .	91 23
Post-office expense,	27 39
Furniture and chapel fixtures,	213 06
Medicines and hospital supplies,	515 13
Hay and straw,	767 79
Clothing,	508 70
Hats and caps,	107 83
Crockery, tin, glass, hard and wood ware, .	185 74
Stoves, ranges and repairs,	244 95
Blacksmithing,	131 91
Painting buildings,	449 79
Fine feed,	159 21
Tobacco, snuff and pipes,	214 36
Brooms and brushes,	101 98
Rice,	179 48
Beans,	285 28
Ox cart and harnesses,	83 33
Farming tools and seeds,	117 19
Potatoes,	164 42
Sulphur and potash,	15 00
Two-horse mower,	83 50
Pasture for cattle,	30 94
Powder, fuse, &c.,	5 50
Glass, nails and putty,	9 28
Coal,	2,616 56
Total,	<hr/> \$35,065 60

Balance remaining of the appropriation for the year 1861,
\$10,396.51.

Respectfully submitted,

L. L. GOODSPEED.

September 30, 1861.

P H Y S I C I A N ' S R E P O R T .

To the Board of Inspectors of the State Almshouse at Bridgewater:

GENTLEMEN,—The Eighth Annual Report of the Medical Department of this institution is herewith respectfully presented.

Number of males admitted to hospital,	425
females,	361
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Total,	786
Discharged,	548
Remaining, September 30, 1861,	110

Whole number receiving medical aid during the year, 1,060.

The number of deaths during the past year is as follows:

Males,	62
Females,	67
	<hr/>
Total,	129

Number of births:

Males,	25
Females,	24
Stillborn, (sex not recorded,)	5
	<hr/>
Total,	54

Some of the principal diseases treated, with the number of each, are exhibited in the following table:

Brain, organic disease of,	11	Injuries, old,	24
Bronchitis,	16	Mammary Abscess,	5
Catarrh,	56	Marasmus,	27
Consumption,	74	Neuralgia,	27
Convulsions,	11	Ophthalmia,	105
Delirium Tremens,	29	Pneumonia,	15
Diarrhœa, chronic,	14	Rheumatism,	45
Epilepsy,	5	Scabies,	18
Fever, Typhoid,	18	Syphilis,	86
Fever, Scarlet,	8	Tonsillitis,	12
Gonorrhœa,	34	Ulcers,	31
Heart, disease of,	8		

The diseases terminating fatally, and the number of each, are exhibited in the following table :

Apoplexy,	1	Heart, disease of,	1
Asphyxia,	1	Hemorrhage,	1
Brain, inflammation of,	5	Inanition,	3
Cancer,	2	Laryngitis,	1
Consumption,	55	Marasmus,	19
Convulsions,	7	Old Age,	2
Croup,	1	Pneumonia,	3
Debility, senile,	1	Scrofula,	3
Debility, infantile,	3	Smallpox,	1
Delirium Tremens,	2	Syphilis,	2
Dropsy,	1	Syphilis, (Cong.,)	3
Enteritis,	3	Uterine Disease,	2
Epilepsy,	2	Whooping Cough,	1
Fever, Scarlet,	2		

The approximate ages of those who have died, are as follows:

Eighty years and upwards,	4
Between seventy and eighty,	5
sixty and seventy,	9
fifty and sixty,	8
forty and fifty,	12
thirty and forty,	16
twenty and thirty,	18
ten and twenty,	4
five and ten,	7
one and five,	10
six months and one year,	0
Under six months,	35

In presenting the above report, I am happy to state, that during the past year, the sanitary condition of the institution has been as good as could be expected.

There has been no serious epidemic since the last report. Scarlet fever made its appearance April 12th, but soon disappeared. Cholera infantum, a disease which has prevailed to a great extent throughout the State the past summer, has not yet appeared here. Considering the large number of children who have been admitted to the institution during the year, many of whom had been previously exposed to unhealthy influences, an *entire* exemption from the disease is remarkable. This is due, however, in a great measure, to the habits of cleanliness enforced, as well as to regular diet and pure air, and not to medical treatment.

One hundred and five cases of ophthalmia have been admitted to the hospitals, very few of which have resisted treatment immediately, when seen at the onset of the disease; the most obstinate cases being those which had existed for weeks and months previous to the patients' entrance to the institution, and in persons of intemperate habits with scrofulous diathesis.

In conclusion, I believe that the wishes of the Commonwealth have been faithfully regarded in providing for her poor and incurably diseased a comfortable home where they can spend the remainder of their days, and where they can receive such relief as each individual case admits.

S. H. CARNEY, *Resident Physician.*

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT.

To the Inspectors of the State Almshouse, Bridgewater :

GENTLEMEN,—The subjoined report of your Chaplain, for the past year, is respectfully presented for your inspection :

The work of ministering to the spiritual wants of this people is, in many respects, felt to be a labor of deep and peculiar interest ; similar, in some respects, to that felt on visiting “ the Stranger’s Nook ” in the church-yard, where many a thrilling, though unwritten history lies sealed up to the inspection of the great day. Here are assembled, from Sabbath to Sabbath, in constant and cheerful attendance, a people from various nations—old and young—diversified in character and training ; some untainted by the corrupting influences of the world, while others, it is to be feared, are reaping the sad harvest of misspent lives. To break through the barriers of long continued and deep-seated prejudice, on the part of some, against the more prosperous world around them, and to penetrate to the warm, generous feelings, long dormant in the heart, and to call them forth to activity, is felt to be not so much the work of logic as of love. The deep, sympathetic utterances of a Saviour’s love, arrest their attention. Not unfrequently deep feeling wells up, and a recognition of experimental truth, as “ the one thing needful,” is manifested. The yearning of the weary spirit after rest, not found in disregard of the laws of God, seems to be met in the teachings of Him “ who spake as never man spake.” To meet the necessities of those estranged from God, and to a great extent, isolated from kindred and friends, by assuring them that their case is not hopeless ; that if they obey the divine injunction : “ Turn ye from your wicked ways, and come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your souls,” is surely no uninteresting work.

But a greater interest still attaches to the young, whose future destiny depends on their early training. A more interesting group, than those assembled for religious instruction, is rarely to be met. Their sweet voices, accompanied by instrumental music, touch tender chords in the hearts of the aged, and exert a reflex influence upon themselves of incalculable good. Who does not love to hear the children sing, especially during divine worship? The children's Saviour will accept their notes, in accord with nature's universal anthem of praise. Such influences, connected with religious instruction, cannot be in vain. The early lessons of duty to God and man, imparted to them, will, with the divine blessing, make them active and useful members of society. This is our theory, hope, and confidence. Thus humble toil becomes interesting and noble work.

The schools of the institution, if not coördinate with religious training, are coöperative; and are doing an excellent work. That their daily training is a labor of love and beneficence, the teachers seem fully to comprehend. A good degree of proficiency, by many of the classes, has been made during the year; and all seem interested in their studies. The order of the children marks the discipline of the schools; while in other respects they seem each, a large family in the enjoyment of the most kindly home influences. The character of the studies is that of schools in general. Singing by all is made a part of the school exercises, and exerts a very happy influence.

Respectfully submitted,

SAMUEL RICHARDSON, *Chaplain.*

BRIDGEWATER, October 1, 1861.